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Library Trustee Minutes 03/08/11

Robbins Library Board of Trustees
Minutes
March 8, 2011

Call to Order

Chairman Kathryn Gandek-Tighe called the meeting to order at 7:15. Attending were trustees, Katherine Fennelly, Brigid Kennedy-Pfister, Barbara Muldoon, Frank Murphy, and Joyce Radochia.

Absent was Heather Calvin. Also attending was the library director, Maryellen Loud.

Finance Committee Liaison

Finance Committee Liaison Mary Margaret Franclemont attended the meeting for an update on budget issues. A discussion ensued on the library financial situation and revised budget numbers. The children's librarian vacancy needs to be filled urgently. Ms. Loud noted that Nancy Gentile is moving to another library system to become the branch librarian. All departments have to take a certain % cut in this year's budget, which funds will be put towards the deficit for next year. This amounts to \$52,000 for the library. Because Nancy is leaving, the library will have to pay out her accrued vacation, deferred and sick leave buyouts, which is a significant amount.

Her position cannot be filled until July 1st in order to absorb the costs of her buyout. The library has experienced higher usage during the recession. It was also noted that should additional funds become available, the first priority would be to fill frozen positions. The second priority will be to restore cut hours at the Robbins. It was noted that network transfers is very labor intensive. It is anticipated that cuts to the book budget will result in a higher demand to borrow materials from other libraries and thus staff time will increase for processing interlibrary loans. The biggest concern voiced in budget discussions is whether the library and Arlington residents will be denied borrowing privileges at other Minuteman libraries because of the cuts. The library may have been cut more than other departments, but the Finance Committee liaison could not say what the relative percentage is compared to these other departments. This relative percentage (whether it is disproportionate) would affect the library's state certification and thus, borrowing privileges through the Minuteman Network.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of February 8, 2011 were reviewed. Ms. Muldoon moved that they be approved, Mr. Murphy seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

Community Time

No unscheduled members of the community were present.

Communications/announcements

Ms. Loud communicated that Nancy Gentile will be leaving the library to become the branch librarian in Framingham. She will leave on the 23rd. Discussion on a parting gift from the Trustees ensued.

Ms. Loud notified the Trustees that the oral history project at the library in which 4th grade thru High School students will be interviewing seniors will occur March 29th 3:30-5pm. Students will make a presentation about their findings on April 13th 7-8:30 pm.

On Wednesday Mar 16th 7-9 the first Active Adults Program: Positive Aging will occur.

Author Thomas Violet inquired about whether the Library would sponsor an event for him to read and discuss his self-published title "Indecent Acts of Gravity." The trustees discussed the proposal and determined that the library does not have staffing to sponsor this event but he is welcome to use the Community Room independently per the Author Program policy.

A balloon/origami artist wrote to make a request to make a display of fanciful balloon sculptures in the reading room. For reasons of potential disruption of the reading room (popping, wilting of balloons, etc.), this request was not approved.

Director's Report

Trustees reviewed the Director's report.

The Books in Bloom was an apparent success.

Ms. Loud reflected on the budget presentation to the Town Budget Forum. The trustees commended Ms. Loud on her presentation.

The library has had a cumulative 1% increase from July to now. It was noted that there were a number of snow days that resulted in library closure which actually made these numbers lower than they might have been in Jan-Feb.

Fundraising/Foundation

The trustees reviewed the ethics commission letter to Ms. Kennedy-Pfister. The foundation is developing the by-laws. There has been no fundraising on behalf of the foundation. The Trustees agreed that the guidance indicates that there would be significant restrictions on the role of any Trustee who was appointed to both the Board of Trustees and the Library Foundation Board. It was not recommended that the by-laws include a mandatory appointment of Trustees.

Older Active Adult Grant

A number of people have responded to the survey on potential programming for this grant. One item of note was that folks are interested in learning about the tech resources of the library. Another popular possible program was getting in touch with your creative side.

Discussion occurred on whether the library should try to seek underwriting for the programming to defray costs of food or other items. The issue is whether securing an underwriter or sponsor might compromise the program, indicate an endorsement or a particular business, create an appearance of a direct quid pro quo in an area in which the sponsor might have an interest, create an unwelcome precedent, etc. The Trustees had a long discussion on the relative benefits of this suggestion. Ms. Fennelly made a motion to authorize the OAA program staff person and the Library director to investigate sources of funding to underwrite the OAA program without a direct quid pro quo related to topic of the program. Ms. Gandek-Tighe seconded the motion. A vote was held and the motion passed.

Report on Non-profits meeting

Ms. Gandek-Tighe updated the Trustees on the non-profits meeting and noted that it was decided to go forward on putting together a non-profit alliance to raise visibility of town related non-profits in Arlington. Work is ongoing.

Annual Report for the Public

The Trustees reviewed past reports and discussed what we should use this year. It was suggested that challenges be included in the presentation.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be April 12, 2011.

